

GOVERNOR JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM

Friday, April 20, 2007

This is Governor Jennifer Granholm.

Stem cell research holds the power to improve the lives of thousands of Michigan citizens, and I have been a consistent advocate of expanding this promising science.

Earlier this month I joined with a number of other governors to urge the U.S. Senate to pass legislation ending federal restrictions on embryonic stem cell research. Now, in our very own Michigan state legislature, Representative Andy Meisner has re-introduced bills that would lift the decades-old restrictions on embryonic stem cell research in our state.

The Michigan laws that restrict stem cell research are outdated, from a time before scientists really understood the amazing potential that stem cells hold. Meanwhile even as the U.S. Congress supports stem cell bills, President Bush maintains that he will reject and veto any legislation expanding stem cell research. With the President and mainstream America disagreeing on this issue, it's critical that we move forward in Michigan.

Every day, thousands of families in Michigan struggle as loved ones suffer from Parkinson's disease, juvenile diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, multiple sclerosis and spinal cord injuries. Embryonic stem cell research has the potential to vastly improve treatment of these conditions, and even eventually help scientists find life-saving cures.

Studying stem cells helps scientists better understand the process that creates the specialized cells that make us what we are. Doctors can use stem cells to generate new tissues and cells for medical therapies. And studying embryonic stem cells can help doctors to pinpoint the causes of some of the most serious medical conditions we face.

And, not only could stem cell research potentially save lives and prevent disease, it could also attract good jobs and millions of dollars of investment in life science businesses to Michigan. This will allow our world-class university system and research hospitals to take a leading role in this cutting-edge scientific inquiry.

Michael J. Fox, who suffers from Parkinson's disease, tells us that "if stem cell research succeeds, there isn't a person in the country who won't benefit, or who won't know someone who will."

I agree, and that's why we need to act now. Representative Meisner's legislation will pave the way for sensible, safe embryonic stem cell research.

The men, women and children who suffer from conditions for which there is no treatment or cure deserve our help. So do the families and friends who care for them. Let's take the lead in Michigan by updating our laws and allowing and encouraging potentially life-saving embryonic stem cell research in our state.

Thank you for listening.